

all, efforts are made towards new possibilities, social, political and religious. Though Medievalism is sick almost to death, the ideas of the modern world are forming in the greatest minds of the day.

In spite, however, of the general decay, in spite of these attempts at change and reconstruction, the succeeding century saw mediaeval institutions bolstered up and the creation of modern England postponed. The diseases that were destroying England in the reign of Richard the Second were still eating at her heart in the reign of Richard the Third. The problems that beset her were but laid aside under the Lancastrians, to be solved under the Tudors. Only in the light of later history do we perceive in full that the age of Wycliffe holds a great place in the progress of our country, that its efforts were not futile and that its great men did not live in vain.

The first sign of general decadence was the downfall, in the later years of Edward the Third, of the military and naval power that had been erected in the great days of Gre"cy and Sluys. When in the year 1360 the Treaty of Bretigny made over **to** the English Crown a third of the country which we now know as France, English seamanship was as supreme in Western waters as English arms on the Western continent. From Oorunna to ^Rotterdam no harbour-master dared to pilfer or annoy the traders who brought the English wool, no foreign craft dared board the vessels that sailed beneath the cross of St. George. From the border where Christendom lay encamped against Islam in the shadow of the Sierra Nevada, to the utmost Bohemian forepts, there had been found no chivalry able to contend with the archers of England. Our nobles and gentlemen were the governors of Southern France, the cruel taskmasters of broad and fertile provinces. \* I witnessed/ says Froissart, \* the haughtiness of the English, who are affable to no other nation than their own ; no gentlemen of Gascony or Aquitaine . . . could obtain office or appointment in their own country ; for the English said they were neither on a level with them nor worthy of their society, which made the Gascons very indignant/ Had such high-sounding